



State Department on Aging

Written Testimony before the Aging Committee

Roderick L. Bremby on behalf of the State Department on Aging

February 5, 2013

I am pleased to submit testimony on behalf of the new State Department on Aging which, pursuant to section 19 of PA 12-1, June special session, became effective on January 1, 2013. The legislation provides that "*The Department of Social Services shall administer programs under the jurisdiction of the Department on Aging until the Commissioner on Aging is appointed and administrative staff are hired.*" As of this time, a commissioner on Aging has not yet been appointed and accordingly, the Department of Social Services continues to administer these programs.

S.B. No. 522 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION.

This bill would not result in any policy changes to the Elderly Nutrition Program but does increase the state portion of funding by appropriating \$3.7 million for the program. The Elderly Nutrition Program is funded by a variety of sources, including federal, state, and local funds, as well as voluntary client contributions.

The Elderly Nutrition Program is a federal and state funded nutrition program that provides meals and other nutrition services to eligible participants, most of whom are age 60 and older. The program is authorized under Title III-C of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA). In addition to state and limited local funding, federal sources of funding include OAA Title III-C and the Nutrition Services Incentives Program (NSIP). Although a suggested donation is requested of participants, no one who is unable to make a donation is denied a meal. The program is operated through regional and local projects throughout the state by community organizations designated as Elderly Nutrition Providers (ENPs), under contract with an Area Agency on Aging. Meals are provided at congregate meal sites and by home delivery. Each meal must meet nutritional requirements and special dietary needs must be considered. In addition to providing meals, the Program provides an opportunity for socialization, nutrition education, nutrition counseling and access to social services.

Program statistics:

- The Elderly Nutrition Program serves more than 2 million meals each year with federal, state and local funds and voluntary client contributions.
- The program served 1,256,014 home delivered meals to 6,340 consumers in FY 2012.
- The program served 811,055 congregate meals to 18,008 consumers in FY 2012.
- In FY 2012, the total federal funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program was \$9,228,938.
- In FY 2012, the total state funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program was \$2,495,942.

The following chart reflects total (state and federal) funding from 2009 to 2012. It should be noted that in 2010 the increase in funding was attributable to an infusion of approximately \$1,157,700 in federal ARRA funds.

TOTAL STATE & FEDERAL NUTRITION FUNDING				
AAA	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	11,878,576	12,915,539	11,775,819	11,724,880

Funding for the program has been relatively level; rising food and transportation costs, along with reduced voluntary client donations, pose challenges to the agencies' ability to serve participants. This proposal is well-intentioned but would result in an increased cost to the program therefore; the department cannot support the bill.

H.B. No. 5765 (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM.

This bill proposes to increase the annual eligibility requirement for an individual with Alzheimer's disease from \$41,000 to \$50,000.

At this point, the bill does not propose to increase overall funding for the program to account for greater demand that would accompany the increase in the income limit. Therefore, raising the income limit would likely reduce the amount of funds available to lower income clients, who, with limited resources, are the greatest users of this program and most in need of respite services.

In addition, it should be noted that, under PA 09-75, the annual eligibility requirement for an individual with Alzheimer's disease was increased significantly from \$30,000 to

\$41,000 effective July 1, 2009. The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services was also given the authority to increase the income and asset eligibility criteria to reflect the annual cost of living adjustment in Social Security income, if any, without having to go through the legislature.

Thus, an expansion of eligibility at this time of limited resources cannot be supported.